

## **Media Advisory**

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### **Case and Demographic Characteristics of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses Cases with Lost Time for Virginia's Private Sector Announced for 2000**

**RICHMOND** – Sprains and strains continue to be the most frequent type of injury to Virginia workers who lost time from work, according to the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry, which has released case and demographic information on Virginia workers collected from the Annual Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses, 2000. All characteristics are reported in terms of cases involving days away from work, a measure of the severity of occupational injuries and illnesses.

In addition to demographic and occupational information, other available data include nature and sources of injuries and illnesses, events and exposures, and the part of the body affected. Data are available for private industry and for Virginia state and local government.

The Annual Survey is collected under a cooperative agreement with the U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Incidence rates for 2000 data were released in January.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported a total of 1.7 million injuries and illnesses in the nation's private sector workplaces requiring recuperation away from work in 2000, about the same number as 1999 and 1998. Virginia's results were somewhat different for 2000, reporting 39,742 incidents, compared with 37,060 in 1999, an increase of 2,682 cases. This result halts a two-year decline in such incidents in the Commonwealth.

Some highlights of the 2000 injury and illness characteristics for Virginia's private industry workplaces include:

- Of the 39,742 cases reported in Virginia private industry, 43.6% were sprains and strains, a result similar to that of the 1999 Survey.
- The part of body most often affected by injuries and illnesses in the workplace was the trunk (13,819, or 34.8%), including the shoulder and back, results that were similar to those obtained in the last four years.
- Contact with objects and equipment was the most common event division causing employees to lose days from work (12,458 cases, or 31.3%), followed by overexertion (10,167 or 25.6%), again quite similar to results from the last three years.

- Men continued to experience twice as many incidents as women due to the concentration of men in more hazardous occupations and industries such as transportation and construction.
- Women, however, experienced 1,281 more serious injuries and illnesses than men in the services division of the service-producing sector, involving health and education services, for example. Men had more incidents in other service-producing divisions such as transportation and public utilities and wholesale and retail trade.
- Workers in the 35-44 age group had the most cases (12,806 incidents, or 32.2%), followed by the 25-34 age group (10,363 or 26.1%).
- Occupations experiencing the most injuries and illnesses involving days away from work were truck drivers (4,292 incidents), nonconstruction laborers (2,630 incidents) and nursing aides, orderlies and attendants (1,638 incidents).
- Workers with 1 to 5 years of experience with their employers continued to have more incidents (12,425, or 31.3%) than any other length of service category.
- Of those responding, 10,910 (27.5%) did not report race or ethnic origin. White, non-Hispanic workers accounted for 17,939 cases, or 45.1%, while black, non-Hispanic workers accounted for 7,970 or 20.1% of the incidents. Hispanic workers made up 2,491 or 6.3% of the cases.
- The source of most injuries and illnesses was floors, walkways and ground surfaces (7,191 or 18.1%), followed by containers (5,600 or 14.1%), and parts and materials (5,447, or 13.7%).
- The number of injuries and illnesses involving musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) in Virginia increased to 11,598 in 2000 from 10,800 in 1999. MSDs include cases where the nature of injury is sprains, strains, tears; back pain, hurt back; soreness and the like; and where the event is bodily reaction/bending, climbing, crawling, reaching, twisting, overexertion or repetition.

Tables revealing additional data on the characteristics of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses involving days away from work in 2000 and data for public sector workplaces may be obtained from the Office of VOSH Research and Analysis.

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